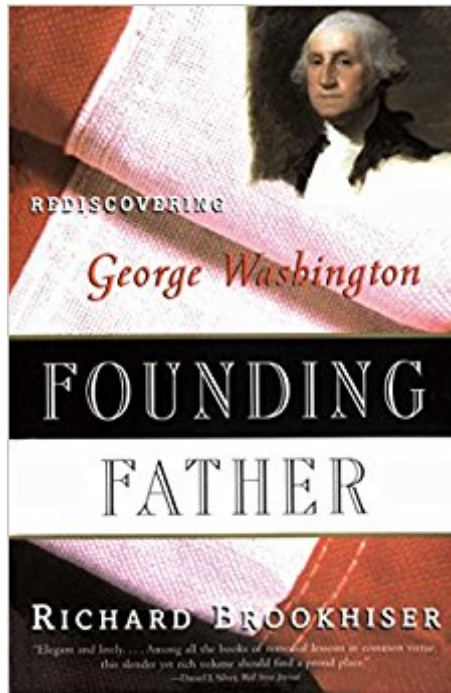


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# Founding Father: Rediscovering George Washington



## Synopsis

In this thought-provoking look at George Washington as soldier and statesman, Richard Brookhiser traces the astonishing achievements of Washington's career and illuminates how his character and his values shaped the beginnings of American politics. Brookhiser recaptures the real George Washington in this against-the-grain biographical study that chronicles a remarkable quarter-century career in public life—a record of achievements that is virtually unmatched by any modern leader. Brookhiser recounts Washington's heroic deeds as general and president, his temperament and training, and reflects upon his legacy.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A slaveowner who had no children of his own, George Washington, the "father of our country," parented wife Martha's two children and treated his staff during the Revolutionary War as "surrogate children," according to Brookhiser. George seems to have had weak emotional ties to his own father, Augustine Washington, who died when his son was 11. Despite having the equivalent of a grade-school education, the first president, an avid theatergoer, read widely in politics and current affairs. His destiny as the nation's leader filled him with anxiety, and his aristocratic civility held in check a dangerous temper. Although this Founding Father, a rich plantation owner, hoped slavery would end, he acquiesced to the status quo and refused to sell any of his slaves over the last 20 years of his life. Born an Anglican, Washington, who joined the Freemasons in his early '20s, believed in the providential workings of a God who is an active agent. In this incisive biographical

study, National Review senior editor Brookhiser (The Way of the WASP) assembles revealing personal details to help reconcile the public persona with the private man. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Contradicting the recent trend that denigrates Washington, Brookhiser, senior editor at the National Review and author of *The Way of the WASP* (LJ 11/1/90), offers this "moral biography" of the first president. He explores Washington's role as a general, his part in the writing of the Constitution, and his years as president. Brookhiser then turns to Washington's private life, examining his character, his strong sense of duty, and his constant struggle to hold his temper in check so he could be an effective leader. Finally, the author describes Washington's role as the father of his country. Washington's concern was not only for his current problems but also for future ones he saw facing his developing country. This readable, revisionist biography offers a new slant on Washington and is highly recommended for academic and public libraries. Grant A. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I'm so glad that I chose this particular biography of George Washington. Not only did I learn about Washington's behavior and actions in the presidency, I also learned a lot about his interior character. The only thing I missed in this biography was I would have liked to know more about the personal relationship George had with his wife. I later learned from the internet that Martha (George's wife) had herself destroyed all of their correspondence, so this probably limits the information available on his personal relationship with her. Some of the things I enjoyed most about this book were learning that in spite of a very basic education, George continued to self-educate, reading many books on widely ranging topics, and then often writing to the authors for further discussion. Even after retirement, he subscribed to ten newspapers. Washington had a temper, and learned at a young age to control it. As he was not good at small talk, he kept his mouth closed, and said nothing. He realized that people hung on his every word, and took great care about what he permitted himself to say. His manners were impeccable. The wife of the British Ambassador wrote that, "Washington had perfect good breeding, and the correct knowledge of even the etiquette of a court, though HOW he had acquired it, heaven knows." The answer was that he had been practicing his manners for half a century since the age of 15. He was spiritual, rather than overtly religious. He was a great believer in divine providence, as well as good morals. He looked to the ancient Romans for inspiration, as well as to Shakespeare. He was also a Freemason. After some outside reading on Freemasonry, my own conclusion about it was that it was a widespread men's organisation of the

the time, populated by rational, intellectual, educated men of good character, professing a belief in God (but less so in miracles and divine revelation), sharing discussion of ideas, and doing charitable good works. I don't see a problem with belonging to such an organization. I enjoyed seeing Washington's behavior during the Constitutional Convention, and a detailed discussion of the issues during the Convention. I enjoyed learning the details of the problems Washington faced in his presidencies. These included too many visitors, which he solved with weekly receptions for whoever chose to come. The two big problems in his second term included the Whiskey Rebellion, and the fight over Jay's Treaty. I had heard of these, but only learned about them in detail reading this book. This book was packed full of information, so I read it slowly, and took lots of notes. For this reason, it took me quite some time to read it. I appreciated that it was only 200 pages, yet contained nearly all I needed to make me feel like I really knew Washington and why he was so admired. I highly recommend this book for anyone who is looking to know George Washington and his presidency better. I found Brookhiser a good writer. Every sentence in the book was meaningful and interesting.

Gets to the point(s) of why George Washington is so revered in our time and in his. It does not begin at his birth, nor at Mount Vernon. It gets right into the subject matter. Washington was not great as a child or as a teenager. His French and Indian War service aside, Washington came into greatness during the American Revolutionary War---this author takes you there. And he "follows" Washington the rest of his life. A very good read, very readable, highly recommended.

I bought this book right before going to visit Washington's home, Mt. Vernon. It is a decent book, but it didn't add much to my visit as expected. It's always hard, I've found, reading bios of the founding fathers as so much time as passed, and there is often limited first hand information about who these men were. The book is correctly advertised as "not" being a biography, but rather an overview of key times in his life. Richard Brookhiser is a very good writer, but it was hard to come away really feeling like I knew that much more about Washington, again, because of limited first hand accounts. Still, it is worth reading to add to one's collection of great Americans, or great leaders, or great men of the Revolution. A little dry, but a decent, quick read.

good for stop and start reading. - made of four easy reading essays covering the phases of his life.

I love founding father biographies, and this one is a good one. It is not really a biography, but it is

not advertised as one. A good brief overview that does not try to tear an American Hero down. Brookhiser digs into the complexities of the once in a millennium leader in a fast pace fun to read book. The author even goes to bat for Washington against some of the modern contrived rumors designed to lessen Washington's character. You will not be disappointed if you admire the character that America was founded on!

Richard Brookhiser does an admirable, if Spartan job, of keeping the memory of our Founding Father alive. I bought this book because it occurred to me that with all the titles available these days on Jefferson and Franklin, I hadn't seen much proffered on Washington. I suspected, and still do, that the reason is that liberal academicians prefer to write about those Founders more dear to their hearts. Brookhiser spends very little time on the intimate details of Washington's life. Martha, his wife, is barely mentioned. This book dwells on the highlights of Washington's careers in service to this country. It makes for a good primer to more in depth biography that I plan to pursue down the road. It could serve that purpose for you too.

This book looks into the political life of George Washington from a variety of aspects. It is structured well and fairly easy to read. My only complaint is it can get a little wordy and Brookhiser may somewhat digress away from his key point a few times.

Nice read. GW was a great man and this book provides the evidence. It is hard to imagine an America as it is today without GW at the helm of the army and later of the new country.

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